DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 425 CG 024 334

AUTHOR Robertson, Gwendolyn
TITLE School-Based Peer Mediation Programs: A Natural Extension of Developmental Guidance Programs.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 54p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Arbitration; Developmental Programs; Elementary School Students; Elementary Secondary Education; *Peer Relationship; School Counseling; *School Guidance; Secondary School Students
IDENTIFIERS *Peer Mediation

ABSTRACT

School-based peer mediation programs are natural extensions of the kindergarten-grade 12 developmental guidance programs. Peer mediation programs not only provide schools with alternatives to traditional discipline practices, but also teach students important life skills. Existing research on peer mediation is very limited, yet promising. This paper highlights five successful school-based peer mediation programs around the country, presenting research on their effectiveness and discussing issues facing school counselors who wish to introduce a school-based peer mediation program into their schools. The five programs described include: (1) PROJECT SMART (School Mediators Alternative Resolution Team), implemented in several of New York City's high schools; (2) the Conflict Manager Program implemented by the Community Board of San Francisco and adapted for schools in North Carolina; (3) the Wakefield Junior High Peer Mediation Program implemented in Tucson, Arizona and modeled after the Conflict Manager Model; (4) the Hawaii Mediation Project, first piloted at Farrington High School and now serving 12 high schools, and intermediate schools in Hawaii; and (5) the Mediation in the Schools' Program in New Mexico. Following descriptions of each program and the research conducted to evaluate each program, there are sections discussing characteristics of successful programs, issues in selecting and training mediators, and implications for school counselors. (NB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED346425

School-Based Peer Mediation Programs: A Natural Extension of Developmental Guidance Programs

Gwendolyn Robertson

Department of Human Resource Development

University of Southern Maine

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Gwendolyn Robertson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CG024334

Running head: SCHOOL-BASED PEER MEDIATION PROGRAMS

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

School-based peer mediation programs are natural extensions of K-12 developmental guidance programs. Peer mediation programs not only provide schools with alternatives to traditional discipline practices, but also teach students important life skills. A review of five successful school-based peer mediation programs includes descriptions of the programs and research findings. Existing research on peer mediation is very limited, yet promising. Suggestions for school counselors seeking to implement school-based peer mediation programs are also discussed.

School-Based Peer Mediation Programs: A Natural Extension of Developmental Guidance Programs

Third graders on a playground are arguing over the score of their kickball game. Pushing and shoving follows. Two eighth grade girls are exchanging threats in a school locker room because one gave the other a dirty look. High school juniors gather in a parking lot after school to watch two of their fellow classmates "duke it out" over a girl. American educators in today's schools can attest to the fact that conflict is an inevitable part of a school day. Daily, students are in conflict with teachers, students, and parents. School staff members spend large amounts of their time disciplining students involved in conflict. Traditional methods of discipline such as detention, suspension, and expulsions, are ineffective with many students. Such punitive measures may stop a conflict temporarily, but they rarely resolve it. Thus, schools are in need of more appropriate and effective ways of dealing with conflict (Davis & Porter, 1985a; Williams, 1984).

Currently, a growing number of schools across the country are implementing school-based peer mediation programs as an alternative to traditional methods of discipline. Additional benefits of peer mediation include teaching students nonaggressive conflict resolution skills, improving overall school climate, and shifting the responsibility for resolving student conflicts to students, enabling teachers to spend more time teaching (Davis & Porter, 1985b). During peer mediation, two parties in conflict sit down with a neutral third party to resolve their dispute. Helping teachers and administrators manage conflict in the schools is one of the responsibilities of school counselors (Arrington, 1987; Williams, 1984).

School mediation programs operate on several assumptions which are in essence some of the major tenets of a developmental guidance program. Myrick (1987) defines developmental guidance as an approach that centers on the formation of a positive self-concept through experience and education. Developmental guidance assumes that feelings, ideas, and behaviors are closely linked and are learned. One

of the major assumptions of a school mediation program is that conflict is an unavoidable part of life which can be viewed as an opportunity for student learning and personal growth (Cohen, 1987). In a developmental guidance curriculum, school counselors hope to facilitate student growth by helping students to learn more about others and develop skills related to their relationships with peers, teachers, and adults (Myrick, 1987).

School peer mediation programs also operate on the assumption that learning conflict resolution skills is just as essential as algebra or history for success in our world (Cohen, 1987). Developmental guidance seeks to integrate personal, emotional, and social development with academic development, stressing that the former is just as important to a student's total education as the latter. Guidance counselors maintain that skills in decision-making, problem-solving, and social interaction are important life skills for students to acquire and they also enhance other learning (Myrick, 1987). Skills learned through mediation are also the

skills listed in 1984's A Nation at Risk as essential for academic excellence (McCormick, 1988).

One of the reasons for the success of school-based peer mediation programs is that they are peer programs. Similar to peer helper programs, peer mediation programs are based on the fact that peers speak the same language, therefore students can resolve their conflicts with the assistance of other students as effectively, if not more effectively, than they can with adult intervention (Cohen, 1987; Davis & Porter, 1985a). Peer helper programs capitalize on the power of peer relationships, expand the number of students receiving guidance services, and teach students valuable skills (Myrick, 1987). According to Erikson's theory of human development, adolescents would be receptive to peer mediation because in their struggle to form an identity they have a desire to handle their own affairs (Erikson, 1968). Thus, programs utilizing peers in a school are natural, vital components of a developmental guidance program.

School-based peer mediation programs operate on the assumption that encouraging students in dispute to

work collaboratively to resolve a present conflict is a more effective way of preventing future conflict and getting students to learn to take responsibility for their behavior than punishing students for their actions (Cohen, 1987). This precept is also very much in agreement with developmental guidance programs since such programs emphasize preventive measures, student responsibility, and student choice (Myrick, 1987).

In addition, the objectives of both developmental guidance programs and school-based peer mediation programs seek to enhance school climate. Kaplan & Geoffroy (1990) suggest that counselors focus on the following roles in their schools to make a firm contribution to a positive school climate: expert (acting as a resource for communication skills, problem solving, etc.); trainer (helping teachers and administrators work more effectively with students); process specialist (using group and individual facilitation skills to help students and fellow professionals); and alternative identifier (school counselors are involved with people in and out of school so they often see alternatives not readily

apparent to staff). These roles are a good match with some of the possible roles a school counselor might play in initiating and implementing school-based mediation programs.

Thus, there is a strong basis for the rationale that school-based peer mediation programs are natural extensions of developmental guidance programs. School counselors are change agents in schools in terms of individual and group behavior, but today's school counselors need to be organizational change agents too (Kaplan & Geoffroy, 1990). School counselors interact regularly with all relevant school populations: students, parents, teachers, administrators, and members of the community. School counselor are therefore in a good position to assume a leadership role in assisting their school in developing and implementing more effective and positive means of dealing with in-school student-student, even student-teacher conflict (Arrington, 1987).

The purpose of this paper is to highlight some of the successful school-based mediation programs around the country, presenting research on their

effectiveness. In addition, issues facing school counselors who wish to introduce a school-based peer mediation program into their school will also be discussed.

Review of the Literature

Much of the impetus for school-based mediation programs came from community dispute resolution programs who questioned why our society has waited until people are adults- if ever - to teach the lifetime skills involved in peaceful conflict resolution (Ray, Kestner, & Freedman, 1985). With violence and aggression on the increase in schools and a growing lack of success with traditional discipline methods, partnerships between schools and community programs readily blossomed. The National Association for Mediation in Education (NAME) was established in 1984 to encourage widespread adoption of peer mediation programs in schools, and to provide support and materials to a rapidly expanding movement. Today, well over 200 schools around the country have established student mediation programs (Lam, 1989). Despite claims

of widespread success, limited research exists on the effectiveness of school-based peer mediation programs, because the programs are still new.

Model Mediation Programs

The following paragraphs include descriptions and research results of five well-established programs around the United States.

In 1983, several of New York City's high schools plagued by crime, vandalism, violence, truancy, and dropouts, instituted PROJECT SMART (School Mediators Alternative Resolution Team) to help alleviate some of the school's problems (Davis & Porter, 1985b). The program was initiated by the Victims Services Agency (VSA), a community dispute resolution center, and partially funded by the NYC Youth Bureau. William Cullen Bryant High School in Queens served as a pilot site due to its size (3000 students), diverse ethnic backgrounds of students, and the principal's strong interest in the program. VSA obtained office space within the school and obtained a commitment to mediation as an integral part of the school's discipline program. The training costs and program

coordinator's salary were paid by the NYC Youth Bureau.

PROJECT SMART includes both classroom seminars and mediation services (Lam, 1989). The project coordinator conducts classroom seminars to introduce all students to the mediation process and generate interest in the program. The seminars are done at teachers' requests in place of regularly scheduled classes. PROJECT SMART was also publicized via posters and "GET SMART" buttons (Davis & Porter, 1985a).

Any student expressing an interest in becoming a mediator is invited to a training session. One of the most prominent mediation trainers in the United States, Joseph Stulberg, designed and conducted the initial and subsequent SMART training sessions (Davis, 1986). Training is offered three times during a school year and each session is limited to 25 participants (Lam, 1989). Participants may include students, parents, teachers, safety personnel, and administrators (Davis, 1986). The length of the training is a total of 20 hours and is conducted over two or three weeks after school (Lam, 1989). The training includes the following skills: setting up a hearing, gaining trust,

gathering facts, questioning, note-taking, identifying and prioritizing issues, and writing up agreements (Davis & Porter, 1985b).

Trained mediators are available throughout a school day to mediate cases referred by students or school personnel (Lam, 1989). Intake interviews are done daily by the project coordinator, an adult from outside the school system, to determine whether the dispute can be resolved through mediation. Cases involving weapons, drugs, or injuries are not resolved through mediation. Mediation is done in pairs; two students mediate student/student disputes and an adult and a student mediate student/adult conflicts. Student mediators receive school service credit and citizenship recognition for their involvement with PROJECT SMART (Davis & Porter, 1985b).

PROJECT SMART has not been formally evaluated, but illustrative statistics of the program's success have been cited. The following statistics were compiled during SMART's initial two years at William Cullen Bryant High School: (a) 88 students and 23 adults were trained as mediators; (b) 260 disputes involving over

620 students were resolved through mediation, with 90% of the mediated agreements being upheld; (c) suspensions for fighting dropped from 63 to 18 over the two year school period (1983-1985); and (d) over 3,000 students attended the seminars on mediation and nonviolent problem solving (Davis, 1986).

Due to the success of the SMART pilot program at William Cullen Bryant, the program expanded to include a total of seven NYC schools, including one junior high (Lam, 1989). The following statistics were compiled over a four year period (1983-1987) for the seven schools in the SMART program: (a) 349 students trained as mediators in grades 7-12; (b) 1,328 disputes involving 3,235 students mediated, with a 90% mediation agreement success rate; (c) 10,700 students attended classroom seminars; and (d) all student disputes not involving weapons, drugs, of injuries were referred to mediation (Lam, 1989). Overall, the SMART program had a significant positive impact on school violence, fighting, detentions, and suspensions. As a result, PROJECT SMART has served as a model program to other schools interested in starting a school-based peer

mediation program.

Another pioneer of student mediation programs has been the Community Board Program of San Francisco, one of the oldest dispute resolution centers in the U.S. The Community Board's Conflict Manager Program has several goals: (a) to enable students to learn new skills in communication and conflict resolution; (b) to enable students to assume responsibility for improving their social and learning environments; (c) to enable students to build a sense of community and cooperation at school; and (d) to decrease tension, hostility, and violence among students in a school (Williams, 1984). Conflict Manager Programs work to decrease the amount of time school staff spend on discipline and to improve overall school climate (Community Board Program [CBP], 1991).

The Conflict Manager Program trains teachers and students in grades 4 to 12 and teachers to be Conflict Managers, another name for mediators. Helena Davis, who designed the Conflict Managers Program, settled on fourth and fifth graders as the earliest age at which students could absorb and master conflict resolution

skill training (Davis & Porter, 1985b). The student body is introduced to the program through an assembly and/or classroom presentations (CBP, 1991). Elementary and secondary curricula are also available to supplement the mediation program (CBP, 1991).

Potential Conflict Managers are nominated by their peers and selected on the basis of interest, grade level, parent approval, and teacher recommendations (CBP, 1991). Consideration is also given to gender, racial/ethnic identity, and negative or positive leadership, so that the Conflict Managers reflect a cross-section of a school's student body (Davis & Porter, 1991).

At the elementary level, students receive 15 hours of training which consists of activities to build skills in active listening, problem solving, critical thinking, teamwork, assertiveness, open communication, and the conflict management process (Davis & Porter, 1985b). Teachers are trained as well by the Community Boards staff, so that in the future they will be able to train students. Experienced student mediators also eventually assist in training new mediators.

Elementary Conflict Managers work in pairs during recess and lunch periods to help resolve student-student problems without adult intervention (CBP, 1991). The students wear orange t-shirts identifying them as Conflict Mangers. Conflict Manager guidelines include voluntary participation on the part of the disputants, Conflict Managers are helpers not police, and Conflict Managers help others to solve their own disputes, but do not solve problems for other students (Davis & Porter, 1985a).

Middle and high school Conflict Managers are selected and trained in the same manner as their counterparts. Conflict Managers at these levels deal with disputes which occur in class, at lunch, in the halls, and elsewhere on school property (CBP, 1991). Students are either self-referred or referred by school staff, and mediations are scheduled with pairs of Conflict Managers immediately or within a reasonable time period.

At all school levels, Conflict Manager meetings are held bi-weekly or monthly to build group cohesion, provide further training, and to discuss cases (CBP,

1991). The San Francisco program also suggests that teachers, students, and other school staff annually evaluate both their training and their program's design (Davis & Porter, 1985a).

A lack of formal research data on school-based peer mediation programs utilizing the San Francisco Community Board Program's Conflict Manager model makes it difficult to draw any solid conclusions about the benefits of such programs. However, the Community Board Program has generated substantial support for it's peer mediation programs. Based on the success of programs in California, the state legislature passed a resolution requiring schools to incorporate conflict resolution learning programs into the basic school curriculum in grades K-12.

Although the Community Board's Conflict Manager Program is used at all school levels, the elementary level has received the most attention in terms of literature on program effectiveness. According to Davis (1986), evaluations of Conflict Manager Programs in four San Francisco elementary schools indicate a decrease in conflict at school. Administrators at

these schools noted that the conflict resolution skills learned on the playground carried over into the classroom, resulting in less teacher time spent on discipline. In addition, the administrators stated that the students who were not Conflict Managers also learned the skills to resolve conflicts peacefully as a result of the program.

Lam (1989) presented the results of an evaluation of an elementary Conflict Manager Program in North Carolina, modeled after the tenets of the San Francisco programs. Like other school-based peer mediation programs, this program is linked with a community dispute resolution center, the Chatham County Dispute Settlement Program. The setting for the program is a rural school with a population of over 750 students. Twenty-nine of 30 fourth and fifth graders nominated by their peers were successfully trained as mediators. No teachers were trained. The Conflict Managers received certificates and participated in an assembly where they performed role-plays for fellow students to demonstrate how the program could benefit their school. As part of the program, three lessons on conflict and the role of

conflict managers were integrated into the social studies curriculum. The school's Conflict Manager Program project coordinator and the school counselor held bi-weekly meetings with the student mediators to practice skills and discuss problems and solutions associated with encountered disputes. The students also recorded their activities and thoughts in a journal.

The Conflict Managers mediated 145 disputes over a three month period (Lam, 1989). Measures used to evaluate the program included a Conflict Manager's Counselor and an evaluation form completed by teachers. The evaluation reports included only raw data, with no analysis. The data indicates that the following outcomes resulted from the implementation of the Conflict Manager Program in North Carolina: (a) a positive impact on the self-image of the mediators, (b) more favorable student and teacher attitudes toward conflict, (c) better problem solving skills demonstrated at school, (d) increased sensitivity to others (e) high enthusiasm for being a peer mediator, and (f) an enhanced leadership ability among the

Conflict Managers.

The Wakefield Junior High Peer Mediation Program (WPMP) in Tucson, Arizona, is another successful program based on the Conflict Manager Model. The site of the first peer mediation program in Arizona, Wakefield Junior High was chosen as a pilot site by the Community Mediation Program (CMP) of Tucson because of strong administrative support for the program. The school's guidance counselor, a trained mediator, also encouraged the school to implement a peer mediation program (McCormick, 1988). The program was planned and implemented by a coordinating committee, consisting of CMP staff members, a guidance counselor, administrators and teachers. Program goals included (a) a decrease in the number of officially reported and student reported aggressive conflicts, (b) remedial effects on unreceived leaders trained as mediators, (c) remedial effects on at-risk students who use the mediation process as dispu-tants, and (d) favorable attitudes toward collaborative problem solving by the student body. Unreceived leaders were defined as students who use bully tactics, intimidation, and aggressive

behavior to influence other students.

Students at Wakefield were introduced to the program by CMP staff who conducted roleplays and answered questions during homeroom periods and a school-wide assembly (McCormick, 1988). Students then nominated two of their peers to be mediators. The coordinating committee then selected the students to be trained based on whether they possessed some of the characteristics of good mediators, and how well the students balanced extracurricular activities with schoolwork. In addition, the committee chose equal numbers of males/females and students perceived as unreceived leaders to ensure that the program would be well received by the total school population.

Initially, CMP trained five teachers, one administrator, and two guidance counselors in mediation philosophy and skills (McCormick, 1988). CMP then trained 25 students in a three day, eighteen hour workshop based on the San Francisco model. Student mediators are assigned to the same homerooms, enabling them to meet each morning for twenty minutes to discuss issues and practice skills.

McCormick (1988) published the results of a nine month comprehensive study of the WPMP. Methods of measurement included a single group pretest/posttest, participant observation, student attitude questionnaire, interviews, peer mediator survey, and documentary evidence (referral slips for fighting, etc.). Based on the aforementioned program goals, the results of the follow. The number of official reported aggressive conflicts among students decreased by 47% in the first three months of the program operation. This was shown to be significant at the .06 level. Sixty percent of the students sampled responded to the student counselor item regarding the number of student self-reported aggressive conflicts. The number of students who said they had recently been involved in a conflict diminished 51% from before the WPMP. Taken together the 47% and 51% figures appear to show a decrease in overall student-student aggression at Wakefield as a result of the peer mediation program.

Only two students classified as unreceived leaders were selected as mediators, thus it is difficult to make any generalizations regarding the remedial effects

on unreceived leaders trained as mediators. The responses of the two students who were selected indicate that these so-called "troublemakers" were very enthusiastic about the problem solving process, and competent as mediators (McCormick, 1988).

Similarly, there were also few at-risk students referred to the WPMP as disputants. Only two at-risk students experienced the mediation process (McCormick, 1988). These students were successful in reaching solutions to their conflicts through mediation, and their in-school behavior showed marked improvement after the implementation of the WPMP. The results did show that at-risk students who participated in mediation developed more favorable attitudes toward collaborative problem solving than at-risk students who did not participate. This suggests that students may need more than just modeling to change their attitudes; they may need to be actively involved in the mediation process at some point. Finally, there was no statistically significant change in student attitudes toward collaborative problem solving as a result of the WPMP (McCormick, 1988).

To conclude, the Wakefield program effectively reduced student-student aggression despite several limitations. McCormick (1988) recommends including a larger number of unreceived leaders as mediators. Reformed anti-aggressive role models increase the chances that other "trouble-makers" will participate in mediation programs. Males need to be equally represented in the number of mediators. Boys often exhibit more overt aggressive behavior, and are thus usually reported for aggressive behavior more often than girls. Therefore, many disputants tend to be males. Young people generally feel more comfortable confiding in peers of the same sex, so male disputants will probably want male mediators. In addition, McCormick stresses that the mediation process needs to be associated with both genders. Other recommendations included the need for more written training materials, scheduling mediation immediately after disputes occur, clearly articulating the mediation program to teachers, getting parent volunteers to assist with the program, and on-going public relations after the initial program implementation (McCormick, 1988).

In 1981, Farrington High School, with a student population of 2,300, was the pilot site for the Hawaii Mediation Project established in response to the administration's concerns over ethnic hostility and racial tension in area schools (Davis & Porter, 1985a). The neighborhood justice center and the University of Hawaii worked together to begin the program. Funding was supplied by community education funds (Davis & Porter, 1985b). The pilot program started at Farrington with 15 students, 7 teachers, 1 counselor, and 5 parents.

In subsequent years the program has expanded to twelve Hawaiian high schools and intermediate schools (Davis & Porter, 1985b). Hawaii student mediators are chosen from a list of candidates generated by having all members of the school community name three people they perceive to be leaders (Davis & Porter, 1985a). The nominated students are then assembled, the program explained, and students decide if they are interested. The mediators are selected from the remaining group of students. Students chosen represent all grade levels and reflect the ethnic population of the school's

student bodies.

Training takes place during two intensive school days using the training manual for school mediation designed by University of Hawaii professor, Mel Ezer (Davis & Porter, 1985b). Substitutes are hired so teachers can participate. Students, teachers, administrators, counselors and parents are trained together (Davis & Porter, 1985a). The categories of conflict to be mediated are delineated and include gossip/rumors, arguments, dirty looks, classroom behavior, harassment, jealousy, fights/pending fights, and invasions of privacy (Araki, Takeshita, & Kadomoto, 1989). As in other programs, disputes involving weapons, drugs, and injuries are referred to police (Davis & Porter, 1985a).

Mediation is voluntary in the Hawaii program; conflicts may be referred by school staff or students themselves (Davis & Porter, 1985b). Students mediate during free periods. Agreements are reviewed by the project coordinator, usually a counselor or teacher, to make sure they do not violate school policy or state law.

Araki et al. (1989) conducted research on the Hawaii Mediation Project. Their sample consisted of three schools: a high school, a junior high, and an elementary school. Five non-project schools (high school, 2 junior highs, 2 elementary schools) were also selected for comparison. Data was collected for the final two years of a three year project. The study looked at the extent to which the peer mediation program had been operationally installed, the nature of conflict in schools, and the effects of the project on school climate and student disputes.

A total of 136 cases were mediated over the two year period. Of the 136, 133 reached agreements with 93% being upheld. Most of the disputes were student-student conflicts, with a small number (12) of student-teacher conflicts.

Measures used in the study included a school climate survey assessment, school profile data, mediation case information, staff opinionnaire, Mediation Project Par-ticipants Questionnaire, and interviews with admini-strators and staff (Lam, 1989).

Results indicated a 91.9% success rate in

mediating student-student disputes. The best situation was found to be two students working together as co-mediators (Araki et al., 1989). The types of disputes mediated most frequently were those involving gossip/rumors, harassment, arguments, and classroom behavior (Lam, 1989). Qualitative data from program participants and school staff indicate the mediation programs had a positive effect on school climate (Araki et al., 1989). However, the survey data from the school climate survey and school profile data, did not show any statistically significant changes indicating a positive effect on school climate (Araki et al., 1989).

Several recommendations were included in the research report. Araki et al., (1989) suggest using an external mediation expert to start a school mediation program, but employ a full-time project coordinator to manage and continue the program. The authors also recommend that schools utilize conflict resolution curricula in addition to implementation of a mediation program. The importance of follow-up training sessions was emphasized, allowing peer mediators the opportunity to practice skills in roleplays.

The final program to be included in this review of school-based peer mediation literature is the Mediation in the School's Program (MISP) in New Mexico. The MISP is a statewide education program funded by a grant from the New Mexico Department of Corrections (Davis, 1986). The program, modeled after the San Francisco programs, was initiated by the Albuquerque Mediation Center and the New Mexico Law-Related Education Project. The program evaluation outlined in Lam (1989) indicates that eight school districts, including seventeen elementary schools, five middle schools, one high school, one Bureau of Indian Affairs School, and one juvenile correctional facility participated in a 1987 study conducted by the New Mexico Center for Dispute Resolution. The study looked at the impact of the MISP on students trained as mediators in the following seven areas: knowledge of approaches to problem solving, development of communication skills, attitudes and behaviors toward conflict and violence, improvement in self-concept and personal outlook, peer relations, attachment to others, and commitment to and involvement with school activities.

At the elementary level, 331 students in grades 4, 5,and 6 were either nominated by teachers and peers or volunteered to become conflict managers (Lam, 1989). Selection of students to participate in training is done by committee and race, sex, ethnicity, and a balance of students with negative and positive leadership are considered. After completing twelve to sixteen hours of training, the peer mediators work primarily on their school playgrounds. Elementary school teachers in grades 4, 5, and 6 also taught a 19 lesson unit on conflict resolution.

Fifty-three middle and seventeen high school students, plus nineteen females from the Youth Detention Center, were selected based on criteria similar to that used in the elementary schools (Lam, 1989). Teachers and students participated in a 14 hour training course. Student co-mediators then mediated student-student disputes and student-adult co-mediators work together on student/adult disputes.

The instruments used to evaluate the MISP included a Student Attitudes About Conflict Scale, Student Observation Form completed by teachers, and a Teacher

Attitude Scale also completed by teachers (Lam, 1989). In addition, the study also employed a pretest/posttest control group design. The control group consisted of 193 students from two elementary schools and 18 students from two middle schools. The treatment group received mediation training, and the control group did not.

Specific statistics on the results are not available. Once again any findings must be viewed as tentative. Overall, the study showed that the MISP had positive impacts on teacher attitudes toward conflict, student problem solving skills, school attachment/commitment, communication skills, amount of instructional time, self-image of mediators, and student attitudes toward conflict (Lam, 1989).

Vermillion (1989) assessed the perceptions of school administrators regarding the MISP. Vermillion collected data from 19 administrators at 3 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 3 high schools which had implemented the MISP. Methods of data collection included a standardized interview instrument, field notes, and tape recordings. Data was also collected

from 10 administrators at 4 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 3 high schools that had not implemented the MISP. Conclusions were as follows: (a) at all school levels administrators confirmed that MISP had a positive effect on the behavior and attitudes of students; (b) at all levels administrators at MISP schools found either a reduction in the amount of conflict between students at school, and/or an increase in student abilities to deal constructively with conflict; and (c) administrators at MISP schools reported large numbers of students choosing to resolve their disputes through peer mediation.

Characteristics of Successful Programs

Cohen (1987) points out that for every successful school mediation program in operation today, there is another program that has failed or is struggling to survive. School mediation programs challenge the way schools have traditionally viewed and dealt with conflict. Change within schools is a slow process. This section will outline some of the important components of successful school-based peer mediation

programs.

The most essential requirement for successful mediation programs is the support of school administrators (Cohen, 1987; Davis & Porter, 1985a, 1985b). The successful mediation programs outlined in the literature review initially began in schools where administrative interest and support were high. Ezer, who conducts the training for the Hawaii Mediation Project refuses to do training in schools where administrators refuse to hold training on school time and pay for substitute teachers (Davis & Porter, 1985b). He feels strongly that administrators need to demonstrate commitment to the program. Ezer also likes to include administrators in the training, especially vice-principals who are usually in charge of school discipline.

Future coordinators of school mediation programs need to get more than just casual support from administrators (Cohen, 1987). When a school starts a mediation program, administrators face several tough decisions: (a) allowing students and teachers to miss classes in order to attend mediation training and later

to mediate; (b) providing class coverage for teachers involved in training; (c) freeing a school staff person or hiring someone to coordinate the mediation program;(d) making space available for mediation sessions to take place; (e) providing funding for the program; and (f) taking time to educate people responsible for continued support of the mediation program, namely school staff, school superintendents, and school committee members.

Given that most schools have limited financial resources, space, etc., school administrators need to be well-versed in the many benefits school-based peer mediation program can provide their schools in order to support the radical decisions necessary for successful programs. This can be accomplished through short workshops, presentations from representatives of successful programs, and providing documentation of existing programs (School Mediation Associates, 1989). Thus, in order to improve a program's chances of success, it is key to earn the support of administrators before implementing a peer mediation program.

There are two things program coordinators can do to help win over skeptical administrators. One is to involve outside community dispute resolution agencies in the initial stages of program implementation (Cohen, 1987; Davis 1986; Stichter, 1986; Davis & Porter, 1985a). The two school mediation programs touted nationally, SMART and San Francisco Conflict Manager Programs, both utilized the expertise of local community agencies. Community programs can provide schools starting peer mediation programs with training materials, actual training seminars, funding, and even full or part-time coordinators (Cohen, 1987). In addition to community agencies, other sources of funding include school improvement funds, drop-out prevention monies, teacher in-service training money, private foundations, corporate sponsors, and donated labor from universities (School Mediation Associates, 1987). Pooling resources with community agencies and other organizations relieves some of the burden facing new programs.

Many of the successful programs outlined earlier recommend combining mediation programs with classroom

units and demonstrations on dispute resolution (Stichter, 1986; Araki et al., 1989). This provides students with opportunities to discuss different ways of dealing with conflict, and familiarizes all of the students in a school with the techniques of mediation.

Extensive public relations efforts are another critical component of successful peer mediation programs (School Mediation Associates, 1987; Stichter, 1986; Davis & Porter, 1985a; Koch & Miller, 1987). All of the factions of a school community need to have a basic understanding of mediation (School Mediation Associates, 1987). The number of referrals and overall support a program receives is directly related to the level of understanding in the school community (School Mediation Associates, 1987). Several options exist: presentations with demonstration roleplays at school assemblies, seminars on mediation in homerooms/classes, posters, t-shirts, articles in school/local newspapers, pre-sentations at school board and faculty meetings, buttons, public address announcements, and printed brochures (Koch & Miller, 1987; School Mediation Associates, 1987).

It is also advisable to start small with a pilot program before implementing system-wide school mediation programs (Davis & Porter, 1985a; Stichter, 1986). The successful programs in Hawaii, Arizona, and New York all began with pilot projects. Project coordinators at pilot sites need to carefully document and evaluate new programs. Effective evaluations are especially critical as they provide evidence of the positive impact mediation programs leave on schools. Such information is critical when programs seek continued funding or expansion. Local universities are good sources of assistance with evaluations (School Mediation Associates, 1987).

School-Based mediation programs require committed, caring and capable coordinators, who also have significant amounts of time available (Davis & Porter, 1985a). Richard Cohen's School Mediation Associates indicates that vice-principals, guidance counselors, teachers, and community volunteers are possible program coordinators. The coordinator must have a personal interest in and understanding of mediation. They may be either full or part time depending on a program's

needs and resources. Schools may also choose to form an advisory committee composed of administrators, teachers, students and parents to assist with the program (School Mediation Associates, 1989).

To summarize, schools considering implementing school-based peer mediation programs can improve the programs chances for success by gaining initial and continued support from administrators, being creative with funding, collaborating with community dispute resolution programs, integrating conflict resolution and mediation skills/philosophy into school curricula, using extensive public relations to inform school/community of the program, starting with a pilot program, and appointing a capable program coordinator.

Issues in Selecting & Training Mediators

This section looks specifically at issues involved in two very important aspects of a school-based mediation program - the selection and training of mediators.

In discussing the selection of student mediators, a consistent recommendation from well-established peer

mediation programs is that mediators should not be only model students in a school (McCormick, 1988; Lam, 1989). A group of student mediators needs to represent the total school population, in terms of leadership abilities, race, ethnic background, and gender. The more diverse the student mediators, the better the chances are that the mediation program will be well-received and utilized by all students.

In Hawaii, every member of the school community, including custodial staff, is asked to nominate candidates for mediation training (Davis & Porter, 1985b). Involving the entire school community contributes to the understanding and support of the program. All of the successful peer mediation programs involve students in the selection process by asking them to recommend peers for the program. This participatory process provides students with ownership in the program. Depending on the needs of the program and the level of interest, many schools have a committee that makes the final selection of students to be trained.

Mediation skills must be taught by experts (Davis

& Porter, 1985a). Excellent on-going training is critical. Enlisting the expertise of community dispute resolution professionals, at least initially, is another characteristic of successful programs. The Community Board Program in San Francisco and School Mediation Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts, train students and staff throughout the country. Local centers are an other option. The training content and length is very similar across programs.

Several of the successful programs reviewed here, namely San Francisco's Conflict Managers, Arizona's Wakefield Peer Mediation Program, and the Hawaii Mediation Project, strongly recommend a provision for on-going training. Student mediators need a forum in which to learn new skills, practice existing skills, discuss cases, and build group cohesion. This can be accomplished by assigning mediators to the same homeroom, holding meetings after school, forming a mediation club, etc.

In starting a school mediation program, one has to decide who will be trained. Training teachers, administrators, and parents, in addition to students,

has several advantages. Promoting understanding and support for mediation in the school community is crucial to program success. Adult mediators are needed to co-mediate student/adult disputes. By including teachers and parents in training sessions, program coordinators can enlist their help in coordinating the program. In addition, nonaggressive conflict resolution styles will be modeled at school and home by adults. Cohen (1988) advocates training students and teachers together. With students and teachers learning together, both groups gain new perspectives on each other. Roleplaying with someone often seen as an adversary facilitates the learning of empathy skills. In the long term, students and teachers often report newfound respect for each other. Other benefits include less time needed for training, which in turn saves money.

This section presented some of the key issues in the selection and training of mediators. We can learn a great deal from the successful programs around the country. Other valuable sources of information for schools looking to implement a peer mediation program

include local dispute resolution agencies and universities.

Implications for School Counselors

Despite the fact that the school-based peer mediation programs discussed in the review of literature often lack solid research methodologies, the consistency of findings across the studies/program evaluations indicates the results do have some merit. In all of the programs, student mediators were very successful in helping two disputants reach a satisfactory agreement. An impressive number of agreements were upheld. This evidence clearly demonstrates that students are very capable of mastering the skills involved in mediation. It also shows that students can resolve their conflicts without adult intervention. Thus, peer mediation has been successful in shifting the responsibility for student-student conflict to students and away from teachers. Teachers are then able to concentrate more on teaching. One might also conclude that the reason for the high percentage of mediation agreements being upheld is

because unlike traditional discipline practices, students participate fully in determining the solutions to their problems.

Proponents of peer mediation programs contend that aggression is an acquired style of resolving conflict and therefore can be replaced with a nonaggressive style (McCormick, 1989). Several programs reported a decrease in conflict at school, especially aggressive conflict like fighting. Thus, peer mediation programs seem to be influential in passing on collaborative behavior with regard to conflict resolution.

Peer Mediation programs across the country have demonstrated that the benefits to students, school staff and school climate are many. Mediation has established itself as a viable alternative to traditional, punitive discipline measures. By assuming leadership responsibility for initiating and implementing peer mediation programs in schools, school counselors expand the opportunities available to students in their schools to learn problem solving skills, communication skills, and responsibility for their own behavior. Mediation programs also allow

counselors to facilitate the learning process, improve students' self-esteem, and change staff attitudes toward a more positive view of conflict. Thus, the findings reported in the literature review support my claim that school-based peer mediation programs accomplish many of the objectives of a developmental guidance program.

In today's schools there is substantial competition for time in school curricula. School counselors are familiar with this struggle as they seek to implement developmental guidance curricula into schools. Mediation programs will be received more readily if they build on skills and knowledge taught in the regular school curriculum. Mediation philosophy can be viewed as extensions of social studies units on peace, and law-related topics. Mediation skills such as writing agreements could be incorporated into English classes. Guidance units on conflict resolution skills can be expanded to include mediation techniques. By integrating the concepts of peaceful conflict resolution into traditional subject matter and/or established guidance units, school guidance counselors

can lessen resistance to peer mediation programs.

The literature on school-based peer mediation programs stresses the importance of extensive public relations efforts in schools implementing programs. Public relations tactics are not new to school counselors; counselors have used to many of the aforementioned strategies generating awareness and support for developmental guidance programs.

Deciding on a program coordinator presents a challenge for school counselors looking to implement peer mediation programs in their schools. With high student-counselor ratios and increasingly needy student popu-lations, counselors are already pressed for time in their positions. Current job demands make it difficult for counselors to find the time to coordinate additional time consuming projects like peer mediation programs. Developmental guidance programs require the help of all school community members in order to accomplish their goals (Myrick, 1987). Expanding developmental guidance programs to include peer mediation programs is no exception. School counselors will need to elicit help from teachers, parent

volunteers, community dispute resolution personnel, administrators, etc.

Training presents several logistical decisions for school counselors, including when and where the training will be held. Other considerations include whether to pull students from classes, locating available space, competition for time with other school activities, whether to offer students credit or other recognition for completion, etc. The solutions to these issues are unique to each school.

Conclusions

School-based peer mediation is an exciting new field. Peer mediation programs offer developmental guidance programs new opportunities to enhance students' growth and development. Mediation programs provide a place for students to learn valuable life skills for living in a global, multi-cultural society. These programs provide a place where students can constructively deal with anger, and learn to respect differences between people. Students learn to communicate their feelings, and improve their ability

to generate peaceful alternatives to conflict. Mediation seeks win-win solutions.

Teachers benefit in many ways. They experience less conflict in the classroom, new teaching skills, and behavior/attitude changes in students (Koch, 1988). Administrators can demonstrate options to handling behavior problems, improved school climate, and less behavior problems overall (Koch, 1988).

Implementing school-based peer mediation programs requires schools to make radical decisions and changes in the way they deal with conflict and educate their students. If peer mediation programs are to become integral parts of schools of the future, solid research evidence on their benefits and effectiveness is needed. School counselors need well-documented evidence of success when attempting to convince administrators to support the implementation of a program. In addition, there is a heavy emphasis on accountability in education today. Current research is not only scarce, but has many limitations. Few studies focus on the same variables or use control group designs. Little statistical analysis is available. It is possible that

some of the results attributed to peer mediation are actually due to student maturation or self-selection in groups of mediators (Lam, 1989). Many important questions have received limited study or none at all, such as the impact of teaching conflict resolution skills in school on society, using co-mediators versus one mediator, student/teacher mediation, and the effects of mediation on different types of students. Therefore, it is difficult to draw definite conclusions about peer mediation programs.

Yet, consistency across studies and qualitative and anecdotal evidence suggest that peer mediation has much to offer educators. School counselors cannot ignore the possibilities that peer mediation programs offer their schools. It is time for school counselors to act as change agents, helping their schools to provide students with an education relevant to their future. Peer mediation does not provide an answer to dealing with all of the conflict in schools, but it does offer an empowering, humanistic, educational alternative that is desperately needed in today's schools. Most importantly, the skills learned through

mediation can be applied to conflicts experienced throughout a student's lifetime.

References

Araki, C. T., Takeshita, C., & Kadomoto, L. (1989). Research results and final report for the dispute management in the school's project (Report No. PCR-WP-1989-3). Manoa: University of Hawaii, Program on Conflict Resolution.

Arrington, E. W. (1987). Managing children's conflict: A challenge for the school counselor. The School Counselor, 34(3), 188-194.

Cohen, R. (1987). School-based mediation programs: Obstacles to implementation. NAME News, 10, 1-4.

Cohen, R. (1988). Training teachers and students together. The Fourth R, 14, 4-6.

Community Board Program. (1991). Conflict manager program information sheet. San Francisco: Author.

Davis, A. (1986). Teaching ideas: Dispute resolution at an early age. Negotiation Journal, 287-297.

Davis, A., & Porter, K. (1985a). Dispute resolution: The fourth "r". Missouri Journal of Dispute Resolution, 1, 121-139.

Davis A., & Porter, K. (1985b). Tales of schoolyard mediation. Update on Law-Related Education, 9(1), 21-28.

Erikson, E. (1968). Identity, youth, and crisis. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

Kaplan, L. S., & Geoffroy, K. E. (1990). Enhancing the school climate: New opportunities for the counselor. The School Counselor, 38(1), 7-11.

Koch, M. (1988). Resolving disputes: Students can do it better. NASSP Bulletin, 72(504), 16-18.

Koch, M. S., & Miller, S. (1987). Resolving student conflicts with student mediators. Principal, 59-62.

Lam, J. (1989). The impact of conflict resolution programs on schools: A review and synthesis of the evidence. Amherst, MA: National Association for Mediation in Education.

McCormick, M. M. (1988). Mediation in the schools: An evaluation of the wakefield pilot peer mediation program. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona, Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology.

Myrick, R. D. (1987). Development guidance and counseling: A practice approach. Minneapolis: Educational Media Corporation.

Ray, L., Kestner, P., & Freedman, L. (1985). Mediation in the schools: A report/directory/bibliography. Washington, DC: American Bar Association.

School Mediation Associates. (1987). School mediation program development: Implementation checklist. Cambridge, MA: Author.

School Mediation Associates. (1989). School based mediation programs: Implementation overview. Cambridge, MA: Author.

Stichter, C. (1986). When tempers flare, let trained student mediators put out the flames. The American School Board Journal, 173(3), 41-42.

Vermillion, A. G. (1989). Perceptions of public school administrators on conflict resolution education: A descriptive, comparative study. Dissertation Abstracts International, 50, 1552A.

Williams, D. M. (1984). Conflict resolution through mediation: A suggested method of handling discipline problems. The School Guidance Worker, 40, 23-27.